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The Archie MacLeishes were staying with Alice and Dean. The Ormsby Gores, Richard Cavendishes, Joe Alsops, came to lunch. Dean, poor fellow, after a few superb witticisms at the beginning of the meal, retired to his couch, or more probably his bathroom, in a state of acute distress.

The rest of us carried on brightly enough. Archie read his fine poem on the Emancipation Proclamation. E and I had to leave for Belmont, where in the unfurnished house I heard the expected lament over rusted water pipes, tumbling chimneys, termite infestations, and the numberless calamities to which property is vulnerable, and more unhappy for me is the continuing failure of my sole tenant to pay rent on the smaller house.

Tonight we dined at the British Embassy. Gores, Cavendishes, Bohlens, Sammy Hood, the Bonham-Carters, Nicole and Hervé Alphand, a Gore son, just in from Japan, and others. Hervé, [redacted] prevailed upon to do imitations, [redacted] was at his best.

September 24, 1962 - Monday

I almost opened the Dupont Circle Branch of the Riggs Bank this morning. Cousin Natalie Barney had written me from Paris, adjuring me to force my way somehow into her safe-deposit box, and to withdraw from it a "small diamond necklace" she wished to give E. Since Natalie had not been in Washington after 1935, entry to her box required the observance of quaint legal formalities. Finally, the deed was done. I romped away with a dirty, but attractive, child's necklace. I do love Cousin Natalie. At 85, she is much more amusing than most of my contemporaries. Nor is she idle as a poetess, and is a pundit on rhyming and life.

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Lunched with Bill Foster. Profited by his views on disarmament.

Tonight, we were to have dined with the Schlesingers, and gone on to a Robert Kennedy symposium at his Virginia place. Arthur was detained in New York; I let E go with Marian, while I went to bed for once at a reasonable hour.

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absorption spectacular, his personality--perhaps this is the most important--that seems of an impartial philosopher. He will have to make the great choice, which wrecked John Quincy Adams, and, in a different degree, Eisenhower, whether he will be the leader of all the people, or whether he must advance partisan interests. Our most effective Presidents have done the latter. I have no quarrel with the decision, because, otherwise, they accomplish little except a continuance of the status quo. Nevertheless, there is something inspiring about nailing the colors to the national mast, and going down with the guns futilely blazing.

Long wait
[redacted] at Idlewild. E had taken off at ten a.m. this morning, I am slated for 8 p.m. VIP treatment, a minor but comfortable condition.

Why I keep a diary is beyond me. In the two episodes of my life, on which I would prefer to reflect, namely during my duty in OSS and my administration of the Marshall Plan in France, I did not do so. I believed in, and scrupulously observed, the intelligence understanding against the former, until relieved from it during the Normandy landings, and afterwards I could have done so on my tour with ECA, but thought it of no moment. Later, I made what were, in effect, jottings to have a basis of recollection if questioned by Congressional Committees. This has proved invaluable, as a refreshmen of my all too fallible memory.

I sit at the moment, in Idlewild Airport, scribbling idle notes. What an odd civilization we have produced. In this little room, there is a television screen, radio facilities, with short wave contacts ~~with Thais, Burmese, or any other~~ articulate peoples, telephones, drink galore, couches and comfort. Are the spoiled customers superior to non-traveling Igorots, Papuans, or Ecuadorian Indians? Perhaps and probably, though one would not deduce this from their conversations.

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